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11 January 1966

CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING

THE CONGO

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(MAP, THE CONGO)

I. The Congo, long the prime trouble spot of the African continent, is in a period of relative quiet.

A. Army chief Mobutu, who named himself President following his coup on November 25th, is a staunch anti-Communist and close to the US and the Belgians.

1. His Premier, Leonard Mulamba, is one of the few able army officers.
2. Mobutu is relying for advice on the "Binza group," the civilians who were powers behind Adoula when he was premier two years ago.
3. Most of the other politicians are out of the picture for the time being.
 - a. Former Premier Tshombé has withdrawn to Europe on "vacation." Former President Kasavubu has returned to his tribal area in the western Congo.

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b. Parliament has been sent home, and Mobutu's austerity program is trying to cut down on the perquisites of the legislators.

B. The next few months, however, are likely to see a gradual reheating of the political pot.

1. The job of pacifying the areas affected by rebellion over the past two years will continue to be a major drain on the government's meager reserves of men and money.
2. Moreover, there is not much likelihood that Mobutu will have any more success than his predecessors in coping with the country's monumental economic and administrative problems.
3. This situation will offer openings to the politicians, who are already dissatisfied by the austerity program.

C. By contrast, the military picture is slowly but steadily improving.

1. Almost all of the outside sources of supply for the rebellion have been cut off, and rebel morale and discipline have declined sharply.

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2. Rebels still move freely through large areas, however, and the campaign to re-establish central authority throughout the country will be long and arduous.
3. New contingents of South African mercenaries are arriving, to replace some of those who went home when their contracts expired after Tshombé was dismissed.
4. Meanwhile, mercenaries from some of the French-speaking countries, backed by Congolese troops, have gradually been herding the rebels away from Lake Tanganyika, toward the interior where they can be cut off from contact with bases in Tanzania.
5. The Cubans who formerly worked with these rebels are no longer in evidence. More than 100 Cubans are reported to have left Tanzania, and those who remain apparently no longer enter the Congo.

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